



Police in Kushtia shot Mohammad Rahat Ali to death

Fact Finding Report
Odhikar

On September 16, 2012, Mohammad Rahat Ali (53) son of late Nawab Ali and Mosammat Ramesa Begum of Bashbaria village under the Mirpur Police Station of Kushtia district was arrested by the Mirpur police from Shah Ali Mazar Market area in Dhaka. On September 18, 2012 at around 3:45 am, Rahat was taken to Kursha Eidgah field in Mirpur of Kushtia where he was shot to death, claims his family.

The police informed that, Rahat was a regional activist of Purbo Bangla Communist Party (ML Red Flag). However, his family says that Rahat was a farmer and used to earn a living by singing folk songs in the village

Odhikar carried out a fact-finding mission into the incident. During the mission, Odhikar interviewed:

- Rahat's relatives
- Eyewitnesses
- The doctor who conducted the post mortem
- The morgue assistant of the hospital and
- Members of the law enforcement agencies.

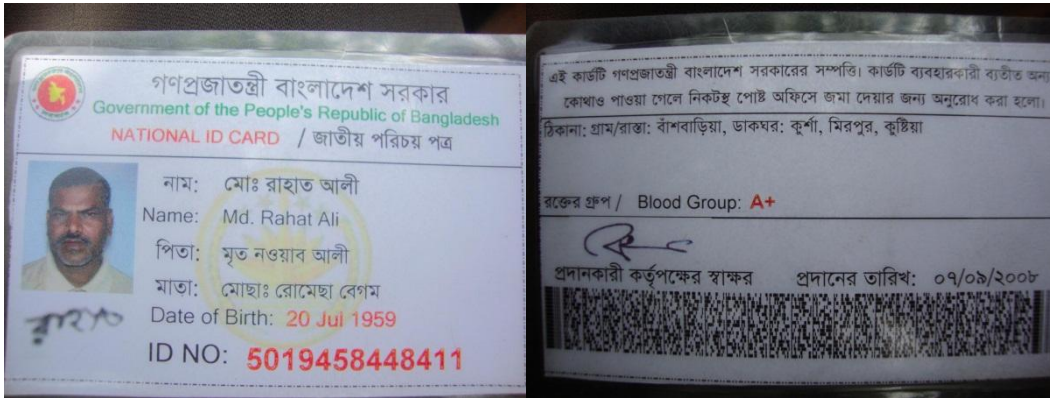


Photo: Rahat Ali's National ID card.

Razia Begum (40), Rahat's wife:

Razia Begum informed Odhikar that Rahat was a farmer and used to sing folk songs in the village. After being arrested in a murder case in 2002 and subsequently serving jail time for 10 years Rahat was released in July 2012. While Rahat was in jail he was diagnosed with heart disease. After he was released from jail, he went to Madras, India for treatment. On September 8, 2012, after returning from India, Rahat was in Dhaka. She used to stay in contact with Rahat via cell phone. On September 16, 2012, he went to visit the Shah Ali Mazar (shrine) under the Shah Ali Police Station in Dhaka. At around 8:00pm, a man (name undisclosed) informed her through

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cell phone that a few men identifying themselves as members of the Detective Branch took Rahat away from the road beside the shrine. He also said that the police will take Rahat to Kushtia the same night. Upon hearing this news she contacted her neighbour and a local journalist Mohammad Abdul Halim. Halim told her that he has talked to the police and was told that Rahat will be brought to Mirpur Police Station, Kushtia from Dhaka. The police also said that they have to pay the police to have Rahat freed. On September 17, 2012 at around 7:00 pm she met with Halim and gave him fourteen thousand taka. She contacted Mirpur Police Station and the office of the Superintendent of Police. However, the police said that Rahat was not with them. On September 18, 2012, at around 3:45am, she woke up to the noise of some gunshots in the Kursha Eidgah field beside her house. Upon hearing the noise, her brother-in-law, Mahtab Ali went to the field. Mahtab returned from the field and informed her that the police shot Rahat to death. She rushed there but police did not let her go near the body. The police took the body away by a van. In the morning, at around 7:00am, a policeman came to her asking for money to transport Rahat's body to Kushtia General Hospital from the police station for post mortem, and return home afterwards. She gave Tk 3070 as van fare to the policeman. The policeman took Mahtab along with him to the police station. Mahtab returned home with Rahat's body at around 3:00pm. The body was later buried in the family graveyard. She claims that the accusations by the police, that her husband was a member of Purbo Bangla Communist Party (ML Red Flag) and there were lots of cases against him, were completely false.



Photo: Rahat's house. Rahat's mother still anticipates him.

Mohammad Amir Hossain (36), Shopkeeper, Shah Ali Mazar Market, Dhaka:

Mohammad Amir Hossain told Odhikar that on September 16, 2012 at around 8:30pm he saw his acquaintance Rahat Ali having tea at the tea stall at shop 15 and 16 of Shah Ali Mazar Market. Three men in plain clothes appeared there, grabbed Rahat from behind and searched his whole body. After some time five more men in plainclothes appeared. When the people present there wanted to know who they were and why they were holding Rahat, one of them identified themselves as member of DB police. They took Rahat from in front of "Ma Hotel and Biriyani House", a restaurant on the opposite of the market. He saw that a grey microbus was parked there, in which they boarded Rahat and drove away.

Mohammad Selimuzzaman, Officer in-Charge (OC), Shah Ali Police Station, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Dhaka:

Mohammad Selimuzzaman informed Odhikar that he does not know anything about DB police arresting any man named Rahat from Mazar Market on September 16, 2012.

Monirul Islam (25), Eyewitness:

Monirul Islam told Odhikar that on September 18, 2012 at around 3:45 am, he woke up to the sound of a car. He got out of his house and using his torch he saw three police vans parked on the road leading to Kursha Eidgah field beside his house. There were also a few policemen standing on that road with torchlight and arms. Two policemen were hustling a man. At one point the policemen took the man to the Eidgah field and pressed him face down onto the ground. A few minutes later, he heard sound of gunshots. He saw that after shooting the man to death the police officers themselves began shouting “Help! Help! Miscreants are trying to kill us!” After hearing the gunshots and screams of the police locals gathered at the Eidgah field and saw Rahat’s body lying on the field. He said that since Rahat was shot by forcing him onto the ground the bullet pierced through his body and about quarter a yard into the ground. Later the police officers took the body away on a van.



Photo 1: Using a stick, a man is showing the hole that the bullet made in the ground. Photo 2: An eyewitness is showing the bullet hole in the ground.

Minarul Islam (27), Eyewitness:

Minarul Islam informed Odhikar that on September 18, 2012 at around 3:45am he heard a few gunshots coming from Kursha Eidgah field beside his house. He woke up and went towards the field. Using his torchlight he saw police vans parked on the road and as the police were flashing torchlight. Other policemen were pressing a man face down onto the ground. Later a few more gunshots were heard. He saw his acquaintance I.C. (In-Charge) of Majhihaat Police Camp SI Khairul Anam there. When one policeman saw Minarul Islam he called him and asked whether he knew the bullet wounded man. He said that the man was his neighbour Rahat Ali. Later, he left after seeing Rahat’s body.

SI Khairul Anam, I.C. (In-Charge), Majhihaat Police Camp, Mirpur Police Station, Kushtia:

SI Khairul Anam told Odhikar that Rahat Ali of Bashbaria village has died in crossfire with police and to contact Mirpur Police Station to know more about this matter.

SI Hayat Mahmud Khan, Mirpur Police Station, Kushtia:

SI Hayat Mahmud Khan informed Odhikar that on September 18, 2012 at around 1:35am he got to know from secret sources that 8/9 armed miscreants are having a meeting at Kursha Eidgah field regarding some destructive mission. He talked to the Officer in-Charge of the police station, Sikder Mohammad Moshir Rahman and they reached the scene at around 3:45am. Once the miscreants sensed the presence of the police they opened fire at them. In order to save government property and their own lives he and other policemen present there, fired back at them. The shooting went on for about 15/20 minutes. The police fired 35 rounds of bullet. Later the miscreants fled the scene. Upon hearing the gunshots local people came to the field. After carrying out a search with torch lights, he saw a man lying there shot and bleeding from his chest and back. The local people identified the man shot was the regional leader of Purbo Bangla Communist Party (ML Red Flag) Rahat Ali of Bashbaria village.

At around 4:35am he created a seizure list and took Rahat Ali to Mirpur Upazila Health Complex. The doctors at the hospital declared him dead. He prepared the inquest report of the body. In the report he mentioned that there were bullet wounds in the left, centre and right side of the body's chest. There were no other wounds in the body. He sent the body for post mortem to Kushtia General Hospital with Constable Sirajul. After the completion of the post mortem the dead body was handed over to the family members. Later, he returned to the police station and filed a case as the plaintiff against 8/9 unidentified people for obstructing government duty under section 332/353/302/34 of The Penal Code. The case number is 18; date: 18/09/2012. The investigation officer of the case is Officer in-Charge (Investigation) Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman. He filed another case against the miscreants for possessing illegal arms and explosives under section 19 (A) of the Arms Act, 1878 and section 4 of the Explosives Act, 1908. The case number is 19; Date: 18/09/2012. The investigation officer of the case is IC (In Charge) of Chakiladoho Police Camp SI Mukarram Hossain.

Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman, Officer in-Charge (Investigation), Mirpur Police Station, Kushtia:

Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman told Odhikar that he is investigating the case number 18 filed by SI Hayat Mahmud Khan as the plaintiff on 18/09/2012 and since the case is under investigation he was unwilling to divulge anything about it.

SI Mukarram Hossain, IC (In Charge), Chakiladoho Police Camp, Mirpur Police Station, Kushtia:

SI Mukarram Hossain informed Odhikar that he is investigating the case number 19 filed by SI Hayat Mahmud Khan as the plaintiff on 18/09/2012. During the investigation he found posters, leaflets and other items which confirmed that Rahat was a regional leader of Purbo Bangla Communist Party (ML Red Flag). He was unwilling to disclose anything more about the matter.

Sikder Mohammad Moshiur Rahman, Officer In-Charge (OC), Mirpur Police Station, Kushtia:

Sikder Mohammad Moshiur Rahman told Odhikar that Rahat Ali of Bashbaria village was a regional leader of Purbo Bangla Communist party (ML Red Flag) and an enlisted criminal in police records. Following his release after serving long time in jail, he got involved in criminal activities again. Rahat was not arrested. He died during police encounter.

Dr. Mohammad Faruk Ahmed, Medical Officer, Mirpur Upazila Health Complex, Mirpur, Kushtia:

Dr. Mohammad Faruk Ahmed informed Odhikar that in the dawn of September 18, 2012, members of Mirpur Police Station brought a man they identified as Rahat in the hospital. After examining the patient he came to conclusion that the patient had died before being brought to the hospital. So he declared him dead and gave his death certificate to the police members. Then they left the hospital with the dead body.

Dr. Mohammad Motaharul Islam, Medical Officer, Kushtia General Hospital, Kushtia:

Dr. Mohammad Motaharul Islam told Odhikar that on September 18, 2012 at around 12:20pm, Constable Shirajul Islam of Mirpur Police Station brought a dead body to the morgue. He got to know from the police that the person's name is Mohammad Rahat Ali. He conducted Rahat's post mortem and his post mortem number is 155. Rahat died after he was shot. He was unwilling to say anything more about this matter. The police left with the body after the completion of the post mortem.

Laxman Lal, Morgue Assistant, Kushtia General Hospital, Kushtia:

Laxman Lal informed Odhikar that on September 18, 2012 the Mirpur Police brought the dead body of a man identified as Rahat Ali to the morgue. Dr. Mohammad Motaharul Islam conducted the post mortem. He said that there were bullet wounds on the left, centre and right side of the chest. The police left with the body on completion of the post mortem.

Mohammad Shawkat Ali (43), the person who conducted the bath ritual:

Mohammad Shawkat Ali told Odhikar that on September 18, 2012, he went to Rahat's house after hearing that the police shot him dead and bathed his body at around 4:00pm. He saw 3 bullet wounds on the left, middle and right of the chest. He assumed that before being killed Rahat's hands were tied and broken.

-The End-